Development, Social Policy and Community Action
Lessons from below

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About the book
• How do citizens in poor communities benefit from and perceive state interventions?
• How do citizens in poor communities interact with others in the community to promote the well-being of themselves and their families?
• What are the implications of the above for community based research, policy and practice?

Development, Social Policy and Community Action: Lessons from Below addresses these questions based on rigorous and multi-faceted research conducted in the poor, urban area of Doornkop, Soweto, using a range of different methodological approaches and theoretical perspectives that all broaden our understanding of citizen-community-state interactions in disadvantaged, urban communities in South Africa.

Solutions to poverty and inequality are often designed, implemented and evaluated in a top-down manner, thereby disregarding the views and agency of the poor citizens themselves. Addressing this gap, the authors explore how government assistance, through social grants and services, as well as community support mechanisms provide solutions to citizens in poor communities and the ways that the citizens perceive and make use of such interventions.

This research study points to the need for more nuanced policy strategies and interventions pertinent to local challenges which also resonate with the global search for solutions in similar contexts. With a fresh perspective that addresses the interconnections between state interventions, community and citizens in sustainable social development, this book provides a case for the importance of conducting community-based research that effectively encourages research findings to support communities to effect positive change.
About the editors

Leila Patel is the South African Research Chair in Welfare and Social Development and the Director of the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) at the University of Johannesburg. She has published widely on issues of social development in South Africa and internationally. Her research interests include social welfare policy, social protection, gender, care, the social services and children and youth. Her work experience spans academia, government, non-profit organisations and private-sector social involvement initiatives. She was the former Director General of Welfare in the Mandela government and played a leading role in the development of South Africa’s welfare policy after apartheid. Among her most recent books are Social Protection in Southern Africa (Routledge, 2014), edited with James Midgley and Marianne Ulriksen; and Social Welfare and Social Development (Oxford University Press, 2015). She received the Distinguished Woman Scientist Award in the Humanities and the Social Sciences in 2014.

Marianne S. Ulriksen works at the Danish Centre for Welfare Studies, University of Southern Denmark, and is affiliated to the Centre for Social Development in Africa (CSDA) as a Senior Research Fellow. Marianne’s research areas include comparative politics, political economy of welfare policy development, social protection, social justice, poverty and inequality, mineral wealth and resource mobilisation, and state–citizens relations. Her research work focuses primarily on Southern and Eastern Africa. She has published widely, including in journals like World Development and Comparative Political Studies.

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